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Jacksonville District

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Work to resume at Odyssey Middle School during holiday break

Jacksonville, Fla. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District announced today that although much was accomplished on Odyssey Middle School grounds during the Thanksgiving break, work will resume on Dec. 27 while the school is closed for the winter break. Any recovered munitions items requiring removal will be disposed of at the conclusion of work on Saturday, Jan. 5.

“We are working diligently to ensure that our investigation and removal work on the school grounds is completed as expeditiously and safely as possible,” said project manager Wandell Carlton. “Public health and safety are our top priorities, and our goal is to ensure a safe and peaceful environment in which students, parents and school staff may concentrate on the business of learning without further distraction, as soon as possible.”

The Corps’ contractors estimated that work on the school grounds was approximately 50% complete after Thanksgiving, requiring a return during the December holiday break. As Odyssey Middle School is closed for winter break, only the Corps and its contractors have authority to access school property. In the interest of safety and security, trespassing on school grounds is strictly prohibited.

A geophysical survey to identify areas where metal objects were buried beneath the ground was completed in August prior to the school’s opening for the 2007-08 academic year. Also completed at that time were a complete surface sweep of the school grounds, which confirmed that no surface munitions were present, and soil sampling that confirmed no munitions constituents were present. It is



anticipated that this final phase of removal work and subsequent restoration will complete all work on the Odyssey Middle School grounds, ensuring continued safety for students and school staff.

To date, more than 2,500 lbs. of cultural debris (i.e., wire, building materials, car parts), several munitions items and 31 pounds of munitions debris have been recovered from the school property.

Following completion of work on the Odyssey Middle School grounds, work will begin in the Tivoli Gardens subdivision, with additional work set for a portion of the Warwick subdivision and on the Mockingbird LLC property adjacent to the school. As usual, a phased approach will prioritize and address the areas that pose the greatest risk to public safety. The remainder of the former Pinecastle Jeep Range site will be addressed with a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study, beginning in 2008.

Safety is always the Corps' top priority. Should anyone encounter or suspect he or she has encountered munitions, it is vitally important that they follow the simple "3 Rs" of munitions safety: **Recognize** the item may be dangerous; **Retreat** and do not touch it; **Report** its location to the local Sheriff's Office immediately.

On behalf of the Department of Defense, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers cleans up sites that were formerly used by the military. In 1943, the U.S. government leased 12,483 acres of land in Orlando (Orange County) as an off-post site of the Pinecastle Army Airfield, for use as a gunnery and demonstration range. The site was declared surplus property and all leases were terminated on Dec. 4, 1947.

For more information about the former Pinecastle Jeep Range, please visit our web site at www.saj.usace.army.mil and click on the Pinecastle Jeep Range link or contact the Corporate Communication Office at 904-232-1576.

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